

Shattered Dreams Part 8

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SHATTERED DREAMS

CONCLUSION

By the time Lee and Amanda arrived at the house, Dottie had called all Jamie's friends without any luck - no one had seen or heard from him. Jamie had left a note saying that he couldn't stay in the house another day, knowing that he was the cause of so much trouble. Amanda managed to remain calm, to her own surprise, as well as everyone else's. She called Joe, but got no answer. She was about to call the police when there was a knock on the door. Philip opened the door.

"Mom, Dad's here." He called out.

Amanda hung up the phone before dialing and ran to meet Joe.

"Jamie is..." she started.

Joe held up his hand. "Out in my car." He finished the sentence she had started. "He came to my house. He thinks he's to blame for everything that's happened. Amanda, you've got to straighten this out."

"I know. I'm working on it, Joe. Please have him come inside."

Joe started out the door, then turned to Lee. "I think you need to talk to him more than anybody. He seems to think you resent him for...for..."

"Yeah, I know. I'll talk to him."

Joe went back out to his car and talked to Jamie. After a while, they both were back inside the house. All agreed it was best that Lee and Jamie speak first, so they were left alone in the den.

"You gave us all quite a scare, you know." Lee told him.

"Yeah, well, I figured everybody would be better off if I left."

"How so?"

"Because everything's a mess and it's all my fault." Jamie was close to tears.

"Why, because you got hurt? Jamie, you had no control over that."

"Maybe not, but you still hate me."

Lee sighed and shook his head. "I don't hate you."

"Yes you do. If it wasn't for me, Mom would still be having your baby."

Lee wondered if he would ever be able to think about the baby without feeling the stinging pain in his heart.

"Jamie, I'm not going to lie to you - God knows I've done enough of that already...but never about my feelings. It's true, in order to save your life we had to sacrifice our baby - and that hurt; it still hurts. But, not even for an instant, did I ever blame you or harbor any resentment toward you because of it." Placing his hand on Jamie's shoulder, he continued, "please believe me when I tell you that, while I'll never, truly, be your father, I love you as much as any man could love a son."

Jamie shrugged off his shyness and hugged Lee. Then, as if realizing something, broke away with a sad look on his face.

"But, what about you and Mom?" He asked.

"What about us?"

"You guys split up. That was because of me...because of the way Mom was treating me and the way she was acting with everyone else."

"The problems between your mother and I are just that...our problems. It's between us. You didn't cause it - we did that ourselves. It's not your fault."

"Spare me, Lee. I've heard this speech before, remember?"

"Yeah, well, this speech ends a little differently," Lee said with a smile. "This speech doesn't end with the word 'divorce'."

Jamie gave Lee a questioning look.

"Your mom and I are working things out."

"You guys made up!?" Jamie asked, excitedly.

"Yeah," Lee chuckled softly, "we made up. What about us...are we O.K.?"

"Yeah."

"Yeah? You think you can put up with me for a stepfather?"

Jamie's face broke out in a big grin. "Yeah."

Lee reached over and tousled his hair, then pulled him into another hug.

Lee moved in shortly afterwards and, after a period of adjustment, they settled into being a family. Joe and Amanda regained their friendly relationship, with just a hint of distance between them. It was made quite clear that Lee was the head of the Stetson-King household and was to have a say in the raising of the boys. Lee and Amanda suffered a tragedy that threatened to tear them apart, but their love shone through and their relationship grew stronger because of it. They made a vow to never again let anything, no matter what life threw at them, drive a wedge between them.

One year later....

Lee felt as if he was in a daze. Everything seemed to be happening in slow motion. Amanda's screams of pain echoed in his ears. Had she really cursed him? Had she really blamed him for her pain? He looked down at her. She was drenched with perspiration. Her cries had subsided, but her breathing was ragged and rapid; she was exhausted.

In the distance, the wail of a siren could be heard. The sound brought him out of his confusion and he realized that it wasn't a siren at all - it was the crying of a newborn baby. And, as the nurse handed his wife their son, Amanda's breathing became more relaxed. She looked up at Lee, her eyes full of love.

"Look at our beautiful son, Lee."

Lee bent down and kissed her on the forehead. "He is beautiful...just like his mother.

"What's your son's name?" The nurse asked.

"Well, we haven't really decided..." Lee started.

"Matthew," Amanda interrupted. "His name is Matthew...after his grandfather."

Lee looked at her, tears glistening in his eyes. "Thank you," he whispered, then kissed her gently.

"Hey, Dad," she smiled up at him, "would you like to hold your son?"

Lee was so filled with emotion he couldn't speak, so he simply nodded his head. As she handed him the baby they smiled at each other, their

hearts full of love, as they welcomed this new day...this new hope...this new beginning.

THE END

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file.